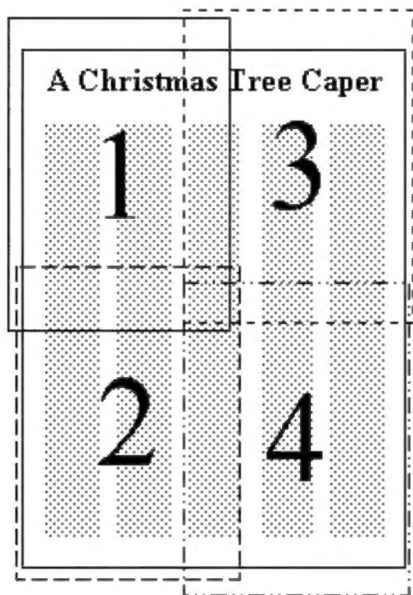


NOTE: This newspaper appearance was divided and enlarged to fill 8 ½" x 11" pages, roughly in the manner shown below.



**TERRY**



YOUR BRUTAL  
MERCENARIES  
ARE BREEDING  
ANTI-AMERICANISM  
IN MY VILLAGE,  
MAJOR LEE. I  
WANT IT STOPPED!

MISS PIKE! I HAVE ALREADY  
APOLOGIZED FOR THE ACTION  
OF THE PILOT WHO FLEW LOW  
OVER YOUR VILLAGE.

AND THAT'S  
WHAT ABOUT THE  
WHAT ABOUT  
MISERABLE



# Saucer for the Gander

By JACK RITCHIE

(© 1958 by News Syndicate Co. Inc.)

**H**ELLEN WALKER'S deep blue eyes were reflective as she described the space ship for me. "It was about two hundred feet long and shaped like a sausage. And it had two rows of square windows."

I thought that over. "Square windows?"

She regarded me with a trace of defensiveness. "What's wrong with square windows?"

I shrugged. "Nothing, I guess. It just seems to me that any creatures who are intelligent enough to travel here from outer space would have heard about round windows. Everybody knows how difficult it is to dust corners."

Helen's father filled his pipe at the humidor.

"Did anyone else on your plane see it, dear?"

She shook her head. "No. And by the time I could call it to anyone's attention, it had disappeared."

Helen smiled at Captain Colby sitting in the easy chair. "As soon as we landed, I reported it immediately to the proper Air Force authorities."

Captain Colby touched his thin dark mustache. "You did precisely the correct thing, my dear. It's my particular job to investigate all U.F.O.'s." He smiled at me. "Unidentified Flying Objects, old man."

chest. "How's his dancing?"

Her eyes widened. "But, Henry, we had to have some recreation too."

## BUSY CHECKING FLIGHT RECORDS

The doorbell rang and Helen went to a mirror. "Answer that, won't you, Henry?"

Captain Colby came in smiling. "I've been busy as a beaver all day, checking flight records, astronomical reports, and weather station data. One can't be too thorough in an investigation like this."

When they were gone, I put my roses in a vase. "How long is this investigation supposed to last?"

Mr. Walker's eyes twinkled. "Perhaps indefinitely."

"He has sharp teeth," I said. "I'll bet he has no scruples."

Mr. Walker puffed thoughtfully on his pipe. "Some women like things that way. It gives them a sense of adventure."

During the next two weeks I saw too little of Helen and too much of Captain Colby. At the beginning of the third week, I closed my law office an hour early and drove to the air base.

lieved in the Cardiff Giant and my father believes in E.S.P." I smiled at him. "Extra Sensory Perception, old man."

He twiddled his thumbs. "We can't put off the investigation until tomorrow. Flying saucers never attack at night."

I sighed. "Very well. I guess I'll have to make that phone call to the Pentagon after all. I do hate to go over anybody's head. It always makes them look so bad. Especially if they're career officers."

He closed his eyes. Then he handed me a pencil and a sheet of paper. "Go ahead. Draw."

He glanced at the sketch I made and snorted. "About average."

I got up. "Well, I imagine you'll be busy as a little beaver all night?"

He glared at me. "All I have to do is get the wheels turning. I'll be out of here before seven."

I smiled and walked to the window. I watched the sky for half a minute and then pointed. "By George, there goes another one. Hand me a sheet of paper, please."

Captain Colby left his desk hurriedly and came to the window. "I don't see a blasted thing."

"Sir," I said stiffly, "are you doubting the word of a taxpaying civilian? That can be dangerous."

I looked back at the sky. "It's gone now. But everything was so

TABLE RESERVED  
AT JACKSON

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### TABLE RESERVED AT JACKSON

I nodded agreeably. "Fine. Leave no star unturned." I turned to Helen. "You'd better get your coat. I have a table reserved at the Jackson for eight o'clock."

She shook her head slowly. "I'm sorry, Henry, but I can't go out with you tonight. I've got to make drawings of my space ships and be interrogated and things like that."

I looked at the captain. "Can't that wait until tomorrow?"

He got to his feet and showed white teeth. "Sorry, but we have to get our information as soon as possible. I'm on duty twenty-four hours a day. Never can tell about those U.F.O.'s."

"But Helen hasn't eaten yet," I said.

He patted my shoulder. "I'll see that she doesn't starve, old man. The Jackson, did you say?"

After they were gone, Mr. Walker went to the television set and switched it on. "It gives you a feeling of security to know those fellows are on the job twenty-four hours a day."

I sighed and sat down on the davenport.

We watched a science fiction program. Somebody from outer space was tampering with the earth's magnetic field again, causing all kinds of tidal waves and snow storms where they weren't supposed to be. However Major Keller of the Space Command restored the poles to their proper places before the last commercial. The earth was safe again. At least until next week.

When I arrived at Helen's home the next evening, she was already dressed to go out.

I extended my bouquet of roses. "Three dozen."

She smiled contritely. "I'm sorry, Henry, but the captain and I have to go over the details again tonight."

I pulled the roses back to my

perhaps indennitey

"He has sharp teeth," I said. "I'll bet he has no scruples."

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Captain Colby was behind the desk in his office.

"Well," I said enthusiastically. "I've finally seen one."

He stifled a yawn. "Seen what?"

"A U.F.O.," I said.

He raised an eyebrow. "Oh, come now."

"I was taking my mother's dog for a walk, and just as we stopped at the fourth tree, I happened to look up. There it was. A flying saucer. It hovered over me for ten seconds and then darted away. I know positively it was a real flying saucer because it made a sharp right turn. That's standard operating procedure for saucers, you know."

He rubbed his temples. "I know."

"Just hand me a pencil and a sheet of paper. I'll draw you a picture while the memory is still vivid."

He glanced at his watch. "Come back tomorrow. It's almost five and I go off duty."

I blinked.

"But this has got to be investigated immediately. Who knows but what the earth may be threatened with invasion. I understand you're on twenty-four hour duty."

He examined his fingernails. "Only in an emergency."

"But this is an emergency," I said. I studied him for a few moments. "I see the trouble. You just don't believe in space ships."

He scowled. "I've heard a lot of fantastic stories since I've been assigned this duty."

### CAN PUT OFF INVESTIGATION

I shook my head earnestly. "But you've got to believe. It helps so much. I come from a long line of believers. I believe in U.F.O.'s. My grandfather be-

one. Hand me a sheet of paper, please."

Captain Colby left his desk hurriedly and came to the window. "I don't see a blasted thing."

"Sir," I said stiffly, "are you doubting the word of a taxpaying civilian? That can be dangerous."

I looked back at the sky. "It's gone now. But everything was so distinct. It had triangular windows."

### BELIEVES HE'S HIT LUCKY STREAK

He took several deep breaths. "Triangular windows?"

"Of course," I said patiently. "They last longer. Everybody's heard of the Eternal Triangle."

I rubbed my hands. "I do believe I've hit a lucky streak. I have the feeling that I'm going to keep you Air Force chaps busy. I do hope you'll be able to keep up with me."

He glared at me while he removed a cigarette from his pack.

I provided the light. "I imagine that now you'll be busy all night. After all, you have two U.F.O.'s to work with. Perhaps I can supply more?"

He shook his head slowly. "Never mind. I get the picture. It's intimidation and blackmail."

I nodded pleasantly and walked toward the door.

He held up the sketch of my first space ship. "Suppose I just tear this up? We can save the taxpayers money."

He broke into a slow grin. "By the way, since I won't be seeing Helen again, you might as well pass on some information. The space ship she saw was just a weather balloon. Sometimes when they reach the upper atmosphere they have a tendency to swing to an almost horizontal position. They've been reported as space ships before."

At seven-thirty that evening,

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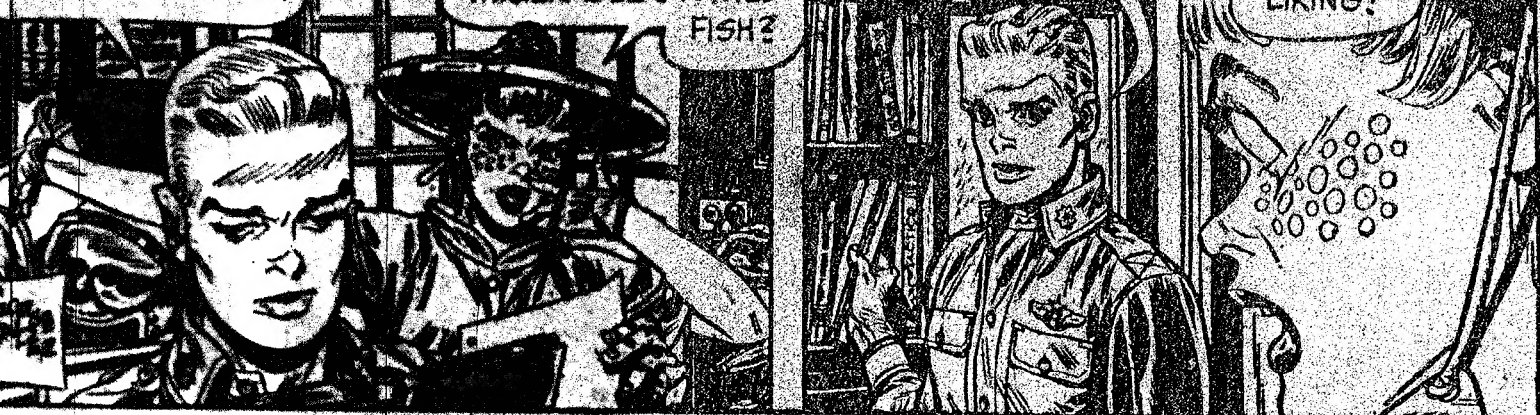
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Helen and I left the house and  
 walked toward my car.

Just as I opened the door, she  
 touched my arm.

She pointed toward the sky.  
 Henry, isn't that light up there  
 a . . . ?"

I took her firmly by the arm  
 and eased her into the car. "No.  
 It isn't."

Perhaps it was.  
 But I prefer to let somebody  
 else worry about that.

THE END



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